

REMARKS

This reply is in response to the Office Action dated May 19, 2006 rejecting claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-11, 14, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33-34, and objecting to claims 4, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32, and 35 as dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicating such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

The amendments above and remarks that follow address all of the points raised in the Office Action and Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 7 has been amended to correct two typographical errors. Claims 4, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32, and 35 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and of any intervening claims, or depend from a claim that has been so rewritten. Claims 11, 16, 21, and 27 have been amended to recite a “housing,” and claims 22 and 28 have been changed for consistency with those amendments. New claims 36-42 have been added. Support for these amendments and new claims can be found, for example, in Figures 3-6B and on pages 13-14 of the application. No new subject matter has been added.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 4, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32, and 35 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated such claims would be allowable if rewritten

in independent form. Applicants have so amended these claims and accordingly believe they are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-11, 14, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,390,351 to Di Giulio et al. (“Di Giulio”).

Independent claim 2 is directed to a control system comprising a plurality of field devices, at least a selected one of which provides a second control function within the control system, including controlling one or more devices. The system further comprises a computing device which provides a first control function within the control system, where the first control function includes controlling at least the selected field device. The computing device includes a control subsystem which comprises a bus and plurality of modules that are coupled to the bus and which each comprise a housing. At least a first module of the control subsystem comprises a controller; at least a second module interfaces one or more of the field devices; and at least a third module interfaces to the field device that provides the second control function.

Independent claim 3 similarly requires at least a computing device, a control subsystem communicatively coupled to the computing device comprising a bus, a plurality of modules that are coupled to the bus and that each comprise a housing.

Independent claims 7, 11, 16, 21, and 27 similarly require at least first and second control devices, at least one of the control devices comprising a bus, a control processor coupled to the bus, and a plurality of modules, at least one of which comprises a housing.

The Di Giulio Reference

Di Giulio purports to teach a communications architecture for a motion control system. The system is configured with abstract nodes called centralized control nodes (CCNs), distributed control nodes (DCNs), and peripheral control nodes (PCNs), all of which can be connected by a bus, as shown in Figure 6, below.

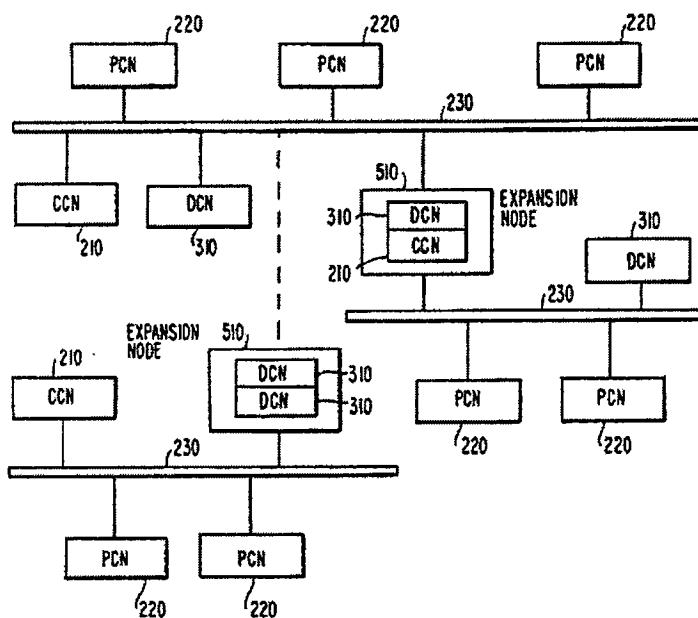


FIG. 6

The Examiner contends that the PCNs 220 represent a plurality of modules. Assuming for the sake of argument that the PCNs are modules, there is no mention of each of the modules having a housing, as recited in claim 2. For example, Di Giulio explains that the CCNs, DCNs, and PCNs of Figure 6 are components or nodes of the system. The nodes—depicted as boxes in Figure 6 and in the other Figures—are not a particular physical structure but logical or functional designations. Di Giulio thus defines the CCN simply as containing a local processor, says the DCN may have a local processor, and says that the PCNs contain a moderate level of circuitry.

(Col. 4, lines 50-67.) A housing for the nodes is not mentioned. Hence, Di Giulio does not teach or suggest a computing device having a control subsystem with a plurality of modules that are coupled to a bus and that each comprise a housing, as recited in claim 2.

The arguments above apply with equal force to establish that claim 3 is patentable over the reference, because claim 3 similarly requires at least a plurality of modules and that each module comprise a housing. Claims 7, 11, 16, 21 and 27 likewise require that at least one module comprise a housing, and are therefore patentable over Di Giulio. The remainder of the rejected claims—claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 22, 28, and 33-34—depend from one of the independent claims previously discussed, and as such are patentable for at least the reasons already stated.

New claims 36-42 further recite that housing is a field mountable housing. A field mountable housing as recited in the claims is likewise not taught or suggested by the prior art, and therefore claims 36-42 are allowable for at least the same reasons as already stated.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicants if such communication will expedite prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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